

Good afternoon. My name is Mike Cuffe. I represent House District 2, which includes ~~Butte~~ and rural Lincoln County.

I am proud to bring to you House Bill 363, a bill which came directly from concerns and problems experienced by cattle and sheep ranchers. Wolves have been the subject of numerous coffee sessions, tavern talk and meetings on the church steps. Perhaps more than any other topic.

Wolves and wolf management, or lack of management, is out of control in Montana. That is one of the few topics that will bring agreement among most Democrats and Republicans, sheepmen and cattlemen, hunters and Bambi lovers, Grizzlies and Bobcats, Chevies and Fords.

My grandfather helped manage wolves a hundred years ago with his 40-82 Winchester. In some kind of a strange reversal of common sense, the wolf is king today. We can't even kill one if it is pulling down a sheep or a calf.

House Bill 363 will give us a tool to get some wolf management in place. It authorizes expenditure of wolf license money for two things. First get serious about putting a collar on one wolf per pack so they can be located easily, especially in livestock conflict areas. Second, hunt down and kill wolves who rip the guts out of sheep and calves.

Some \$325,000 in wolf license money was collected in 2009, and this bill authorizes expenditure of that money plus future license money for collaring and eradicating.

This bill, combined with money granted in House Bill 2 for reimbursement of dead livestock, is a direct response to a plea for help from cattlemen and wool growers. They spoke to us, we listened, we are responding.